

MARINE CORPS MARTIAL ARTS PROGRAM (MCMAP)

Since its inception in 1775, the Marine Corps continues to distinguish itself as a martial culture second to none. The legacy of the Corps is built upon the close combat of ships of sail, the storming of the bois de Belleau, the holding of “Bloody Ridge” on Guadalcanal, and in recent times, the Iraq and Afghanistan Campaigns. In order to better prepare Marines for the conflicts to come, the 32nd Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James L. Jones, envisioned a program that would provide Marines the tools with which to conduct Military Operations in Urban Terrain and to realize the potential of every Marine as a warrior. That vision has been reenergized by the 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James Conway, with the release of his guidance in ALMAR 034/07. The Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP), managed by the Martial Arts Center of Excellence (MACE), continues to be the successful product of that vision.

The Martial Arts Program is based on five, colored-belt levels with six different degrees of black belt. Each belt level is broken down into three disciplines, each of which a Marine must become proficient in before attaining the next belt level. The mental, character, and physical disciplines of the warrior are the foundation of the Martial Arts Program. The mental discipline consists of warrior studies, martial culture studies, combative behavior studies, and other professional military education. The character discipline is built around the Marine Corps’ core values: Honor, Courage, and Commitment, Leadership Traits and Principles,



and troop information. The character discipline stresses the role of the “ethical” warrior on and off the battlefield 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The physical discipline consists of the physical techniques taught throughout the five belt levels. The physical discipline also encompasses the Combat Conditioning Program and the future Combat Fitness Test. Through the successful synergy of these disciplines at each belt level, a Marine will enhance their own warrior spirit and tactical cunning for all the challenges the Marine may face well into the 21st Century.

The following are the belt levels from beginner to expert, with a description of some of the lessons, and prerequisites for each belt:

- **Tan Belt** - Basic techniques and an introduction to the martial culture. There are no prerequisites for this belt. It is designed for the entry-level, basically trained Marine. All Marines attending boot camp at Parris Island and San Diego graduate as Tan belt Marines. All officers graduating at The Basic School graduate, at a minimum, as Tan belt Marines. There are 27.5 hours and 0 sustainment hours for this belt.
- **Gray Belt** - Expansion on basic techniques, introduction to ground fighting



and force continuum. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the commanding officer, complete Tan belt sustainment and integration training, and complete MCI 03.3 Fundamentals of Marine Corps Leadership. There are 32 training hours and seven sustainment hours for this belt.

- **Green Belt** - Expansion on Gray belt techniques, weapons integration / team integration training, and free sparring. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the commanding officer, complete Gray belt sustainment and integration training, Lance Corporal or above, and appropriate level PME complete. There are 30 training hours and 14 sustainment hours for this belt.

- **Green Belt Instructor** - This is the first belt level that is designated as Martial Art Instructor in accordance with the MCMAP program of instruction. An MOS is assigned to this level – 0916. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the commanding officer, complete Gray belt sustainment and integration training, Corporal or above, appropriate level PME complete, Physical Fitness Test score of First Class, and a current swim qualification (thousands of instructors have been trained throughout the Marine Corps).

- **Brown Belt** - Expansion on Green belt techniques, weapons integration/ team integration training, free sparring, and basic firearm retention and disarmament techniques. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the commanding officer, complete Green belt sustainment and integration training, Corporal or above, and appropriate level PME complete. There are 35.5 training hours and 21 sustainment hours for this belt.

- **Black Belt. 1st Degree** - Expert techniques, counters to pistol presentations, advanced anatomy and physiology. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the commanding officer, complete Green and or Brown belt sustainment and integration training, Sergeant or above, appropriate level PME complete, MAI qualified, and current swim qualification. An MOS is assigned to this level – 0917. All career Marines should earn their Black belt within 15 - 20 years from obtaining their initial Tan

belt. There are 34.5 training hours and 28 sustainment hours for this belt (over 1,000 Marines have been trained to the Instructor Trainers level).

- **Black Belt. 2nd to 6th Degree** - Marines designated as Instructors or Instructor Trainers, Military Occupational Specialty 0916 and 0917, respectively, are authorized to advance to these belt levels. The emphasis in these degrees is placed on giving back to the program, unit training, professional studies on martial cultures, and advanced skills within the martial arts program. The MACE is the only organization in the Corps that has the authority to promote to these levels.

The MCMAP techniques, complemented with subsequent training and sustainment to more advanced levels, provide every Marine with the ability and confidence to fight in hand-to-hand combat using any weapon available. The techniques also provide every Marine the self-discipline to understand the responsible use of force, both on and off the battlefield. The effective use of these two disciplines ensures the Marine Corps will win our nation's battles by being the most ready when the Nation is least ready, and secure the peace in the same battle. With the knowledge of the spectrum of violence (force continuum) taught during Gray belt training, and the combination of non-lethal techniques taught in Tan belt, Marines are equipped with the ability to effectively engage in Military Operations other than War (MOOTW).

ALMAR 034/07 was released in July of 2007. The purpose of the ALMAR was

to promulgate the CMC's guidance and support for MCMAP. MCMAP continues to be integral to the development and sustainment of our Warrior Ethos. It is a key asset in developing both warfighting skills and character that all commanders should be utilizing to its fullest potential. The ALMAR goes on further to provide specific procedures and requirements for execution of MCMAP throughout the Corps. All Marines, both active and reserves, will be trained to Tan belt by the end of calendar year 2007. All infantrymen will be trained to Green belt by the end of CY 2008. All other Combat Arms Marines will be trained to Gray belt by the end of CY 2008.

The MACE is located aboard Camp Barrett at Raider Hall in Quantico, VA, on the west side of Interstate 95. From Raider Hall, the MACE conducts four Martial Arts Instructor Trainer (MAIT) courses and six to eight Martial Art Instructor (MAI) courses per year. The MACE also conducts a number of MAI mobile training teams around the Corps every year. Upon completion of the physically demanding, seven-week Martial Arts Instructor Trainer course, a Marine earns status as a First Degree Black belt Instructor Trainer, and a Combat Conditioning Specialist. Upon completion of the challenging three-week Martial Arts Instructor course, a Marine earns status as a Green belt Instructor.

The end state of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program is to develop a professional Marine who is an arms carrying professional who cannot only fight under

a multitude of circumstances, but understands the moral dimensions of conflict, make ethical decisions in any situation, and upholds the image and high moral fiber upon which the Marine Corps has prided itself for more than 232 years. As Marines accept the training and live up to the intent of the program, the potential exists to generate and foster a Corps

of martial and ethical warriors bound to the safety and welfare of their Marines. MCMAP is the vehicle the Corps will employ to propel the transformation from civilian to Marine and promises to develop the characteristics and traits we seek in all our leaders.